Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0916GA-1 for Hall County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This application provides a vision for the first two core educational assurance areas, but lacks specific evidence to support innovation for the remaining two core educational assurance areas.

(1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy: The applicant is in a RTT state, and through an NCLB waiver, uses the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) to measure college and career readiness. The applicant will use the state's teacher and leader effectiveness evaluation tools (TKES and LKES, respectively) in the future, but it is unclear if they will implement the use of the instruments district-wide prior to the 2014-2015 school year. The applicant mentions that the evaluations will be implemented in the 26 participating RT3 partner districts in 2012-2013, but it is unclear if the applicant is an RT3 partner district. The applicant states that they are "already training teachers and leaders in the use of these systems," but is less clear about when they will implement the evaluations.

(2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction: The applicant presents their "comprehensive, innovative learning platform" as the primary source for instructional data.

(3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most: The applicant does not specifically address teacher or principal recruiting/retention in this section.

(4) turning around lowest-achieving schools: The applicant does not adequately address turning around lowest achieving schools.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant takes a high-quality approach to implementing the reform proposal in all schools.

(a) The applicant notes that "all schools, all teachers, and all students" will be included in its proposal, so this criterion is met.

(b) The applicant provides a list of participating schools which includes all schools within the LEA.

(c) The applicant provides a chart including the required student, educator, and school-level data.

Since the list of schools includes all school within the district, and the applicant provides the required high needs numbers as evidence that they meet the application criteria, the applicant scores in the high range.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The high-quality plan will be implemented at scale, including all students, teachers, and schools. The staffing proposals indicate the applicant has a plan to quickly impact district-wide reforms. What is less clear is this section is the plan for professional development based upon a theory of change. The applicant mentions a "change process," but does not provide detail as to what this process involves, or how teaching and learning would change as a result of this process.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section lacked sufficient evidence to support the ambitious nature of the district's overall achievement goals. Specifically, the goals listed were not too ambitious compared to the state goals. The application also lacked specific examples to support the implementation of goals.

Seeking a 100% graduation rate is admirable, but there is no baseline data to support the increase necessary to achieve this goal district-wide, nor is there any school-by-school data noting current graduation rates. Similarly, there is no baseline data or post-secondary enrollment data for current status or for future goals available for review in this section.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(1) The evidence suggests that there is a clear record of success for the past three years, and suggests that the unofficial 2011-2012 official state results indicate that the success will continue. Whittling 11 needs improvement schools down to one is quite impressive, but overall the improvement was not drastic improvement.

(a) The applicant only addresses overall student achievement scores as defined by state end of course tests. The applicant does not address achievement gaps, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.

(b) The applicant neither identifies nor addresses reforms in persistently low-achieving schools.

(c) The applicant does not address how they make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant scores in the high range for this criterion, as they have provided evidence of transparency in the following ways:

(a) The applicant indicates that they publish actual personnel salaries as part of their Annual Report.

(b) The applicant indicates that school-level instructional staff salaries are available as part of their Annual Report.

(c) The applicant indicates that school-level instructional staff salaries are available as part of their Annual Report.

(d) The applicant indicates that they currently do not make school-level expenditures available to the public; however, they commit to making them available to the public upon receipt of the RTT-D grant award.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated a high-level of autonomy under the State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments particularly due to the flexibility in noted in a 'move when ready' law designed to accommodate schools in using subject mastery as a means for course credit.

State law requires that eighth grade "students develop a personalized sequence of study" which align with the district's personalized learning strategy.

The applicant notes that 11 within district charter schools have autonomy in several areas, but still must conform with state summative testing requirements.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This application lacks evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal. While the required

mayoral and state-level letters were included in the appendices, there are no letters of support, nor evidence of parent, student, and community forums such as meeting minutes, flyers, letters of support, and the like. Specifically:

(a) The applicant provided a description of how students, families, teachers, and principals were involved in the development of this proposal.

> ii. The applicant noted that 88% of surveyed teachers support the proposal.

(b) There were no letters of support referenced in this section.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan lacks evidence to support a high-quality rating. The applicant does not adequately address this section as they note historical analysis gaps such as science and social studies achievement; however, they do not propose a specific plan to target gaps or address them. Rather, the applicant proposes a more holistic approach to providing personalized learning plans for students. There is no gap analysis to produce specific, measurable goals.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section lacked specific evidence to support a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The lack of specificity, combined with the following specific omissions in the plan, support a low score for this section.

(a) The applicant addresses college and career ready programs in elementary and middle school levels, but does not adequately describe high school programs beyond indicating how college and career readiness will be assessed. In the elementary level, students will participate in "grade-specific Career Awareness lessons." In the middle school level, students will participate in "college and career ready study;" however, the applicant notes that career exploration and other areas are "limited because of austerity cuts."

(b) The applicant mentions a "program of personalized instruction," but does not provide sufficient detail to determine the depth and quality of this instructional plan.

(c) The applicant does not address training and support for students and parents for personalized learning tools and resources.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	1

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence to support a high-quality plan for all educators to engage in training, and in teams or communities that support their capacity to implement personalized learning. The applicant mentions that "professional learning will be created at the system level," but does not provide any specifics around how teachers will engage with the professional material. The applicant mentions that formative data may be uploaded to their learning platform, but does not discuss how teachers will be trained to use the formative data in daily instruction.

(b) The applicant does not provide any details regarding the use of tools, data, and resources other than to mention that it will be part of "professional learning."

(c) The applicant provides no detail on how school leaders will be trained to lead the personalized learning initiative described in this application.

(d) The applicant does not mention the principal in this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The central office seems to be organized to provide sufficient support and services to schools to implement personalized learning; however, this is not specifically addressed in the applicant's response.

(b) The applicant provides sufficient evidence that schools have the necessary autonomy both in budgeting and programming to implement personalized learning with a high degree of school-level personalization.

(c) State-level legislation provides the opportunity for students to progress based upon subject mastery, as noted by the applicant in this section.

(d) The applicant mentions that "schools are open to providing student those multiple opportunities," but provides no detail regarding specific opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards. What lacked from this section was a clear strategy for engaging all students with increased accessibility to content. While the applicant discussed ELL strategies, they did not address their system's accessibility features for special education or other special populations.

(e) The applicant describes vetted, freely available content provided by the state, and the opportunity to import content from multiple vendors into their learning platform.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant addresses the need for students to have access to "technology devices such as laptop computers and tablets…" but provides no details of this plan.

(b) The applicant states that "support will extend to both the school and home environments through online and physical support where needed." It is difficult to interpret this statement as it lacks sufficient detail, but it does address two strategies, physical and online, to provide support.

(c) The applicant states that "parents can access their individual student's data in an open data format." However, it then mentions this in the future tense which indicates that it is not yet possible in all schools. The applicant does not address student access to their own data.

(d) The applicant states that both "HallConnect" and the "Statewide Longitudinal Data System" are interoperable data systems, but do not identify other systems within the school system such as human resource, financial, or other key data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant notes that they will continue to use the Georgia Assessment of Progress on School Standards (GAPSS), but will modify it to accommodate personalized and blended learning. The applicant then mentions that they will have to develop "an instrument to monitor continuous progress toward the goal of this proposal…" There are few specifics in this section to support a rigorous continuous improvement process, nor does the applicant discuss a plan to publicly share information regarding progress.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the HallConnect system will provide two-way communication opportunities between schools and parents. The system will also provide students, teachers, and parents with formative student achievement data. The applicant also mentions that there is some component of the system that will provide school-level achievement data to the public; however, the applicant does not provide an example of what this indicator or these indicators would be.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant notes that teacher effectiveness "will be measured by the Georgia Teacher Effectiveness Measure beginning 2014-15," but does not describe what instrument will be used prior to that school year. The applicant also does not mention what instrument or measure will be used to determine the effectiveness of principals and other leaders.

(a) The applicant does not address their rationale for selecting measures.

(b) The applicant does not describe how the measure directly informs their proposed plan.

(c) The applicant lists each goal and incremental measures in the chart as required.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists rich research questions that it will use to determine program effectiveness. However, the section reads like a qualitative methods overview, listing many evaluation tools but lacking a concrete plan and sufficient detail to determine the key indicators of program success.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project; however the descriptions of each area are sparse, and the support for each budget item is lacking. For example, the applicant does not fully support the need to send 71 participants to the annual ISTE conference.

(b) The funds seem reasonable and sufficient to support the applicant's proposal

(c) The applicant appears to have copied the equipment description from equipment line item "Wireless N networks" to the next item, Interactive commercial LED displays in classrooms." It is not clear which classrooms at which school-level are included in this request.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is specific about the personnel that it will retain post grant award, but does not specify a funding source. The applicant also notes that it expects continued support for technology upgrades, but does not mention the mechanism by which it will seek this support. There are few specifics listed in section F2 that would indicate that a high-quality plan for project sustenance was created. For example, the "planned progression of technology upgrades" board support is not a clear plan without the details of what is considered technology eligible for upgrades, how often the Board will support the upgrades, the total cost of the upgrades, etc.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Not submitted.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that will significantly improve teaching and learning. The applicant mentioned a comprehensive learning system, HallConnect, throughout the application. This tool seemed to be a focus of the application to a greater extent than how the applicant would train staff and students in the effective use of the tool, and to a greater extent than the content and interactive curricula that would be made available to students through the use of this tool. The lack of community and university partnerships and letters of support is also a concern that could affect the district's ability to sustain the initiatives listed in this application. Overall, the plan lacked sufficient detail, and consequently lacked a comprehensive approach to district reform.

Total	210	78

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0916GA-2 for Hall County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The vision discussed in this opening section of the proposal is bold and insightful. It is indicative of connections to best practices, the use of emerging technologies and the need for broad partnerships. It also breaks out of individual school district boundaries toward a broader vision for education. Its focus on equity issues through personalized student support is clear and aligns successfully with the four core assurance areas.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All schools, all teachers, all students will participate. This is a fully involved project. A, B and C are met.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This project is designed to be transformational in the technological sense. There is no indication in this section about how current achievement gaps are created and in the issues facing students who are behind in literacy and mastery of content (particularly in light of Common Core Standards).

The assumption is that a massive new approach to personalize with a great technology backbone will ameliorate prior issues of poverty, race, second language, special needs and other gaps.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal indicates specific and targeted growth areas for all subgroups and data points for schools, teachers and learners. The performance goal targets are described as ambitious but are quite similar to what would be the targets under prior NCLB or state projections for growth. The goals presented are not stretch goals and not transformative of the achievement gaps.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Some indication of improved results are evident (a). However, only three years of data are included (state results from last year are pending). The amount of growth in most areas is modest (b). The data are public and available (c).   It is less clear from these data that the district can achieve ambitious reform.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The system agrees to make all data above public and easily accessible. A, B, C and D are fully articulated.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Successful conditions exist at the state level for the success of this proposal. The state of Georgia has aligned with Race to the Top specifications and the LEA has revised its protocols and policies as necessary.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section indicates that the district has made efforts to be communicative about the change process and reform ideas, however, the measures described do not to be as inclusive as they might be in the planning process. Letters of support are not included.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The analysis presented mentions the data for the district can show improvement, however, the level of analysis around the needs and gaps is not thorough. For example, the opportunity to drill down to literacy issues for subgroups or mastery issues in light of the introduction of Common Core are not addressed. ELL learners are mentioned but no specific gap analysis is included.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section is comprehensive, honors diversity of learning experiences and honors the grade levels K-12.

The emphasis on literacy in the early grades is crucial.

The career orientation is started early and assists students with choices and opportunities.

The culture and language part is strong.

The changes to PARCC and the focus on improved student learning is strong.

Missing is the emphasis on the implications of the Common Core Standards for teaching and learning (curriculum and assessment).

Also, literacy in the later grades changes as students must using reading to learn more than learning to read.

Focused emphasis on students with learning needs and on students who are high achieving is lacking.

And, the other section of this that is not emphasized is the parent connection.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**10**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The HallConnect system is proposed as a technology-rich way to share curriculum and instruction exemplars, track formative data and provide professional development outlets. The section lacks emphasis on school leaders, leadership teams and on continuous school improvement.

The plan for increasing the number of students who are receiving high quality instruction highly effective teachers and principals is vague.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**6**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The school district reveals the challenges of providing seamless systems to support personalization of learning for all students. The LEA is organized and has been restructured in light of NCLB and Race to the Top initiatives. Technology-based solutions have been implemented.

The specific for providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners is not specifically addressed. The emphasis is on providing additional staff to pull of personalization.

Credit recovery is discussed as a means of providing multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

The role of those staff members and the qualifications for personalization of the learning experience are not specifically addressed.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a strong data system that is accessible by educators and parents. Information technology systems have been upgraded and tools are in place to support this effort. A, B and D are evidence

Online tutors and other electronic learning systems are vaguely discussed (C).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**5**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The use of visitation teams utilizing a specific set of criterion and a rubric to assess progress in personalization of learning is

proposed. In addition, the district discusses the possibility of a specific continuous improvement assessment but indicates it would take time to develop,

The work at each school site and the role of school leaders is unclear. Teachers own work in teams or learning communities to self-assess and monitor progress is not discussed. The process of implementing any recommended improvements appears to be annually, rather than in a more real-time nature.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Ongoing communication with stakeholders is discussed, and multiple strategies will be employed to communicate successes and to gain feedback of constituents. The communication outlets are generally those available currently.

The nature of the timing and process to make changes at the classroom level in curriculum and instruction is unclear.

This section does not appear to be specifically linked to the literacy, culture/language and career components that are the heart of the grant request.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The 2% increase in teacher effectiveness is not ambitious, nor transformational.

The goals in grades 4-5 are reported as compared to state averages rather than to mastery of critical knowledge or skills.

Other measures are mentioned without targets.

Specific measures of language learning, or particularly for students with special needs, English language learners and/or gifted students are not reported.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The primary data sets for evaluation are the annual state test results. These data will provide key benchmarks, but occur in such long intervals, that any evaluation will lag the time to intervene to make adjustments to personalize learning for students before they move on.

Staff training using sign in sheets and curricula is missing the impact component of determining effectiveness.

The use of best practices is mentioned but no specific reference to best practice in evaluating personalization of learning is mentioned.

The role of community partners, compensation reform, schedule modification, etc are not mentioned.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section is not detailed in each component of the above in a), b) or c). The sections lack specifics about the large expenditures of this grant. Errors are included in the math of the budget.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is no complete high-quality plan for sustainability included. No mention of the state and local government leaders' support is included. No budget for after the grant is included.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**0**
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: This section is not addressed.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Not Met**
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: This proposal has comprehensive, cross-district components that are intended to provide literacy, language/culture, career preparation and college ready components. The specific transformational approaches to personalize learning are missing specifics and rely on real-time data systems are not embedded. The role of school leaders, the specific subgroup interventions, the specific partnership outside the district to pull of this effort are not well developed. The technology infrastructure to manage the learning and data systems is budgeted specifically but the connection to the personalization of learning is not well developed.		

Total	210	105

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0
Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments: not included		

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0916GA-3 for Hall County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**5**
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant already has a record of providing high quality education, with a high percentage of students being proficient. The application describes a vision for accelerating this progress through data-based technologies that will enable teachers to personalize learning. The application describes broadly these ideas, such as the development of a technology to house "data" and make it useful for teachers and students, and personalized learning through the accumulation of educational resources vetted by instructional aides which could then be packaged by teachers into personalized learning plans. However, the application is short on specific details about what how the technological systems would work, what kinds of data and resources would be collected, how they would be analyzed and packaged, and how the teaching and learning would be different. In short, there are not enough details to fully understand and have confidence in the applicant's vision, making the vision not "clear and credible."

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has explained, and listed with baseline enrollment data, that all schools from grades 3-12 in the LEA will participate, and these meet the eligibility requirements. The participant has indicated the appropriate subgroups, and the population is appropriate for the purposes of the grant. The LEA has a moderately high percentage of ELL students (37%), but most students already are doing well in the district and do not necessarily indicate a high need.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes hiring a large number of personnel to provide support and training for teachers, as well as using the money to update technology infrastructures and build HallConnect platform for managing data and resources. The applicant also describes good efforts to make the proposed changes LEA-wide and instituted in all of the schools. However, many details are missing about how specifically things will be done, including:- What the hired personnel will do

- What the training provided to the teachers will be about and assurances about how it will be of high quality

- What the HallConnect system will look like and how it will function

- How the instructional resources will be selected to represent a high level of quality

- how the student data will be analyzed and fed into the personalized learning system.

Without these details, there is not enough evidence to support the applicant's logic model of how they will achieve their goals, and why these efforts should be expected to result in improved student achievement.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set goals that are ambitious, yet also achievable. These goals are to improve performances by students by 2% higher than the goals already set by the state. For well achieving students, these will be smaller improvements, but the goals are much steeper for struggling subgroups, meaning that if the applicant achieves these goals, there will be a substantial narrowing of achievement gaps. The applicant has set appropriate goals for summative assessments, graduation rates, and college enrollment, but not degree attainment. However, because of the lack of details about the actual activities the LEA will engage in, there is not a high likelihood of the applicant achieving their vision as yet.

The applicant also didn't provide baseline percentages, so it is unclear what the numbers in the "baseline data" column are, and it makes it impossible to compare projected goals to baseline data.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has taken 11 schools that were categorized as "needs improvement" down to 1, which is remarkable. They also

have provided documentation of improving student outcomes over the past three years for most grades and subjects, although the improvement is at times drastic (42% of 8th graders not meeting expectations in social studies down to 28%), but at other times very moderate (10% of 3rd-graders exceeding expectations in social studies up to 12%). Still, the trend overall is for documented growth and improvement. However, the LEA does not indicate how it has made student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide very many details about its transparency. It is mentioned that the school must publish an accounting sheet each year, including salary information, but it does not say where this is published, or in what form and whether it can be easily interpreted by constituents. The applicant says all data is available by request, but not that it is published at the school level.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the state of Georgia as requiring teacher and principal evaluation systems, which the applicant has adopted. In addition, the state is supportive of efforts to collect and use student data. The state also appears to be supportive of efforts such as mastery-based and dual enrollment credit, which is impressive. However, the applicant does not describe in much detail what kinds of freedoms the state has granted to enact real reform initiatives that may produce different models of teaching and learning from that which has been done in the past. The discussion provided is instead about the reforms mostly already adopted by the state, not those autonomies granted to the LEA. The discussion on charter schools is largely irrelevant as charter schools by definition are vested with certain degrees of autonomy, but the applicant does not clearly explain how this will carry over to the non-charter schools.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described their strategy for engaging with stakeholders as presenting at city council meetings that were covered by the media, and publishing an annual report. These measures are not very interactive, and do not indicate a very high level of stakeholder engagement. No letters of support from teachers' groups, parents, students, or community stakeholders are provided outside of the mayor. The applicant mentions the superintendent sharing some ideas at a community meeting where the ideas were "well received" but there is no evidence to support this claim. The applicant did survey teachers and administrators and found 88% support.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discusses vaguely achievement gaps, but not implementation gaps, or the needed changes that have to occur for the logic of the plan to be implemented successfully.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not discuss how, specifically and with clarity, the LEA will help students to understand that learning is key to their goals, that they will be involved in deep learning, and be able to master critical college and career-ready skills. Mention is made of efforts to encourage cross-cultural learning, including dual language immersion, but not how this will occur for all children in the LEA. Also, few details are provided on how specifically the instructional content will be personalized in its sequence, the quality of the content assured, and how feedback will be regularly provided and reviewed with students and parents, nor the accommodations for specific types of students. Some core ideas are provided in these areas (for example, how a portal-based technology will provide resources and data to students), but not how exactly this will happen (no

information is provided about what kinds of content, how it will be structured and sequenced, what the real choices will be for students, how they will be able to move based forward based on proficiency, review data, etc.).

The LEA does provide instruction on career readiness through the development of career plans, but details are lacking on this program as well.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	2

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In many ways, the application is scant on details about how these reforms will actually be implemented. For example:

-- Mention is not made about how teachers will study and collaborate as teams to personalize students' learning

-- the applicant explains that teachers "will need intense training" but then doesn't explain who will do this training, what their qualifications will be, and how this training will be done effectively.

-- The applicant mentions that formative assessments can be used to create personalized learning environments, but without explaining how.

-- The applicant states that "all the information collected by the system will create usable information for individualizing and personalizing learning" but again we do not know how.

-- information is not provided on how the teacher and supervisor evaluation systems will be used to improve and personalize educator personal development, nor how it will create actionable information on how to improve student learning.

--- Mention is also not made about plans for increasing the number of students being taught by highly effective teachers and leaders.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant mentions hiring new technology learning specialists to support teachers, but otherwise does not address organizing the central office (a) or school leadership teams to implement the reforms. The LEA has autonomy (b) over some staffing decisions, but mentions that flexibility is limited due to austerity cuts. The LEA acknowledges the needs to allow students to demonstrate mastery and progress based on proficiency, but does not yet have strong measures in place to do this, nor does it articulate a coherent plan for implementing these ideas. The applicant says it is "cognizant" of the need to allow students multiple ways to succeed, but it does not appear to have a plan in place for mastery-based credit and learning, nor the opportunity to demonstrate mastery multiple times and ways (c and d). Accessibility (e) is not discussed, which is problematic for an LEA with such a high level of ELL students.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant declared its intention to ensure every student has access to a device for participating in the proposed changes, but does not explain how this will be carried out. The LEA also says that "sufficient personnel and resources" will be available to schools for technical support, but not how this support will be made available. The LEA mentions that parents can currently access student data in an open format, but no details are given on what this format is nor what data is made available. The LEA does have, what appears to be, an interoperable data system for housing data together in one portal, although it is not specific about what kinds of data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	1

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA plans to rely on the state's GAPSS school evaluation system for its continuous improvement plan. The LEA plans to ask the evaluators to look for evidence about its implementation of blended and personalized learning based on a rubric, but the rubric does not exist yet. The LEA mentions that the HallConnect system will provide formative data throughout the year, but it doesn't say what data and how it will be used for continuous improvement. The LEA mentions that it is "important" to monitor students' progress in various areas, but does not give details about how it will do so. No one appears to be tasked with specifically monitoring the effective implementation of the proposal.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA mentions the importance of communicating with parents and that HallConnect will allow for two-way communication, but it does not provide details on how this will actually be done, what data will be communicated, and how the data will be reviewed with parents. Communication with other stakeholders is not addressed.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified various measures. However, there is some confusion about which will be used across the entire LEA to document growth when students in grades K-2 appear to have various different kinds of assessments that the schools can choose to use with them, which would not be standard across the LEA. Some of the assessments are of completed projects (completed Fitnessgram or completed Career Portfolio), instead of scaled, criterion-referenced measures. It is not clear how this data will be reviewed and used for improving implementation or personalized learning.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Evaluation questions are given, along with data sources (although it is not clear what data from HallConnect will be used and in what way). Ambiguous references are made to mixed methods evaluation approaches, but without specifics and without identifying who will be responsible for carrying out the evaluation and what their qualifications are.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Some aspects of the budget are unclear. For example, why 3 million is needed annually for human resources and how this then equals 18 million overall. Similiarly, why 1 million a year for content development equals 6 million overall. Whereas the proposal did not give reasons for supply and travel needs, the large amounts set aside for these purposes in the budget is concerning. For example, it is problematic to note that the LEA plans to send 71 people to the ISTE conference, without explaining why this is essential for implementing their plan. Also, the LEA does not articulate good plans for sustaining the project after the grant and admits that retaining the high numbers of personnel being hired will be challenging.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to hire large numbers of people for this project, and does not yet have strong plans for sustaining the innovations and changes after the grant is terminated.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**0**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address social-emotional goals or partnerships for achieving goals in this area. The applicant does not describe any partnership with private entities or community stakeholders.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has proposed a plan for improving and personalizing learning, and has a track record of being able to do so, along with emphasizing college readiness. Absolute Priority is met, even though details about how to implement the ideas are not strongly articulated, as described in other comments.

Total	**210**	**70**